



Office of the Inspector General

David R. Shaw, Inspector General

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Audit finds several maintenance and safety problems at the California Institution for Men

SACRAMENTO—The Inspector General's audit of the California Institution for Men identified unsafe conditions caused by poor maintenance and years of neglect, as well as several safety and security concerns that pose a danger to employees and inmates.

In the report released today, the Inspector General details audit findings and recommendations to address problems in the 67-year-old prison's operations and programs. The report also summarizes a performance audit of Warden Michael Poulos, who has nearly 30 years of experience with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

"Warden Poulos has made several improvements in his relatively short time as warden," said Inspector General David Shaw. "But many chronic maintenance problems are out of the warden's control because the prison's infrastructure is drastically underfunded."

Major maintenance problems include a useless water treatment system, failing plumbing, leaking roofs, and buildings full of lead paint and asbestos.

The prison's maintenance problems promote hazardous living and working conditions despite an average of \$4 million a year for maintenance and repairs. The department's own expert consultant estimates the California Institution for Men needs \$142 million over the next five years to maintain the prison in its present "poor" condition.

The Inspector General's report also cites the consultant's model that calls for replacement of the entire prison by 2014. The model predicts it would be more cost-effective to demolish and rebuild the prison than spend the hundreds of millions of dollars needed to maintain its present condition. The Inspector General agrees.

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“Warden Poulos can only do so much with the prison’s current funding level,” said Shaw. “Even if the department allocates more funds, the prison in its current condition would continue to burden state taxpayers.”

Besides the ongoing maintenance problems, inspectors found several safety and security problems the prison could address immediately. The most significant problem involved correctional officers inappropriately approving certain high-security inmates for open dormitory housing instead of celled housing. Inmate disturbances can quickly escalate in these crowded dormitories.

Inspectors also found correctional officers working at armed posts who did not demonstrate required quarterly weapons proficiency. Current weapons proficiency is crucial for protecting prison employees, inmates, and the surrounding community if an officer must use deadly force.

Other problem areas at the prison include a lack of effective supervision or surveillance cameras on the visiting yard and the failure to conduct most of the quarterly fire and emergency drills.

The entire audit report may be viewed and downloaded from the Office of the Inspector General’s Web site at <http://www.oig.ca.gov/>.

The Office of the Inspector General is an independent state agency responsible for oversight of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. The office carries out its mission by conducting audits, special reviews, and investigations of the department to uncover criminal conduct, administrative wrongdoing, poor management practices, waste, fraud, and other abuses by staff, supervisors, and management. The Office of the Inspector General conducted this audit under the authority provided in California Penal Code section 6126.

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